

Committee: General Assembly
Delegation: Tuvalu

Topic: Addressing Climate Change and Ensuring Protection for Persons
Displaced Due to Adverse Effects of Climate Change



Tuvalu, a small developing island state of the Pacific, is at the forefront of the adverse effects of climate change, including rising sea levels that threaten its national sovereignty, infrastructure, and the livelihoods of our populace. Tuvalu's communities, heavily reliant on subsistence fishing and marine resources, face severe economic disruption¹ due to the changing marine ecosystems caused by ocean acidification from global warming.² Current projections indicate that up to 95% of Tuvalu's land area will be underwater if global emissions' trajectories remain unchanged.³ As Tuvalu's former foreign minister Simon Kofe warned, "We are sinking, but so is everyone else".⁴

Despite climate change being a global, international-scale issue, Tuvalu has nonetheless taken measures to safeguard its sovereignty through bilateral treaties that protect and affirm our maritime borders and statehood.⁵ Domestically, Tuvalu has implemented measures in coastal defenses and sea walls around key infrastructure, which have resulted in the reduction of the impacts of rising sea levels and even reclaiming lost land. While these measures protect the livelihoods of local communities, they are fiscally costly and may disrupt natural ecosystems.⁶ The delegation recognizes that Tuvalu is in a unique position in addressing the effects of climate change, with monetary assistance and broader support from regional partners and agreements, particularly from the Commonwealth of Australia through the Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union treaty, which has significantly influenced Tuvalu's migration pathways for climate-related mobility.⁷

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- 1 IPCC Sixth Assessment Report: Chapter 3: Oceans and Coastal Ecosystems and their Services | IPCC. (2023, June 29). <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/chapter-3/>
 - 2 Reef rebirth: fighting for Tuvalu's corals | United Nations Climate Change Adaptation. (2024, May 21). <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/reef-rebirth-fighting-tuvalu-corals>
 - 3 Robertson, L. (2024, September 19). Tuvalu: the last generation. UNICEF Australia. <https://www.unicef.org.au/stories/tuvalu-climate-change-photo-essay>
 - 4 Kofe, S. (2021). Minister Kofe's video statement: COP26. Wwww.youtube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpPTFGwFFExg>
 - 5 Australian Government. (2021). Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union treaty. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/tuvalu/australia-tuvalu-falepili-union-treaty>
 - 6 Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project | United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/pacific/projects/tuvalu-coastal-adaptation-project>
 - 7 Bouadze, L. (2022, December 6). Groundbreaking ceremony in Funafuti for Tuvalu's coastal adaptation. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/pacific/speeches/groundbreaking-ceremony-funafuti-tuvalu-coastal-adaptation>

To address the issues facing global warming and its destabilizing effects on vulnerable regions, Tuvalu advocates for working closely with the UN and international community to provide relief to affected regions and populations who face such threats. As one of the nations most vulnerable to climate change, Tuvalu calls for a resolution that provides fiscal relief to afflicted communities with the required funding for coastal defense policies and ecosystem preservation, while reaffirming statehood and assisting displaced persons. Tuvalu also advocates for a UN resolution to create a framework that guarantees and preserves statehood for threatened regions, regardless of land loss, and a framework for a clear pathway to refugee status for displaced persons, as The Refugee Convention does not address persons displaced by environmental degradation or climate-related disasters.